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# ACROSSE



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# LACROSSE

No. 4 in the "How To" Series

FITNESS AND AMATEUR SPORT DIRECTORATE

Can.  
The Honourable Allan J. MacEachen  
Minister of National Health and Welfare

[General publications]

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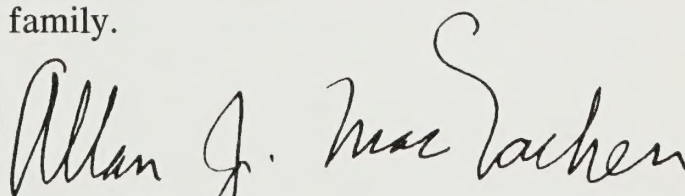
## Foreword

This is a reprint of one in a series of manuals produced by the Department of National Health and Welfare under the National Fitness and Amateur Sports program. Like other material in this series it is prepared with the help of top-ranking Canadian experts; the objective is to extend knowledge and enjoyment of sports and other recreational activities.

Informational aids—in print or on film—are one aspect of the Department's fitness program. The program assists as well in research and professional training to provide a sound basis for development of fitness and recreation in Canada. Technical and financial assistance is also provided for provincial government agencies, and for the work of sports-governing bodies and other national organizations that are active in related fields.

Lacrosse is one of Canada's gifts to the fields of sports. Its historical interest has occasionally overshadowed the fact that it offers a challenge and excitement that few other games can match. A new generation has discovered the challenge for itself. This manual, which may be used alone or as a supplement to other training aids in the "How To" kit, is designed to increase knowledge of the game and encourage participation in it.

Other kits in this series present information on figure skating, family camping, skiing, badminton, water sports and volleyball. It is hoped that they, together with the kit on lacrosse, will help to reveal new dimensions in the use of leisure, and to add to the recreational interests of every member of the family.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Allan J. MacEachen". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of each name being capitalized and prominent.

Allan J. MacEachen  
Minister  
National Health and Welfare

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## Lacrosse—the Canadian Game

No sport played in Canada has a finer tradition than lacrosse. It deserves to be called “the Canadian game” because its roots are deep in our history.

For many years, before and after the turn of the century, lacrosse was a major sport in this country, and the names of lacrosse “greats” were on every boy’s tongue. It was played by both English and French speaking Canadians, and by the Indians who invented it, so it was truly a national game. Professional and amateur leagues flourished, and the game spread to England, Australia and the United States.

Then, as the twentieth century advanced, its popularity declined. Now, it is making a comeback, and if this booklet can help widen interest in this fine sport, it will have accomplished its purpose.

Lacrosse has much in its favour. It has been called “the fastest game on two feet” – it is a game of skill, not brute force (contrary to general belief) and the little fellow can beat his larger opponent by superior ability – it can be played from early spring in all kinds of weather – equipment is not expensive – it is an ex-

citing game to watch. The playing area can be an open field, a hockey box or arena, or even a large gymnasium.

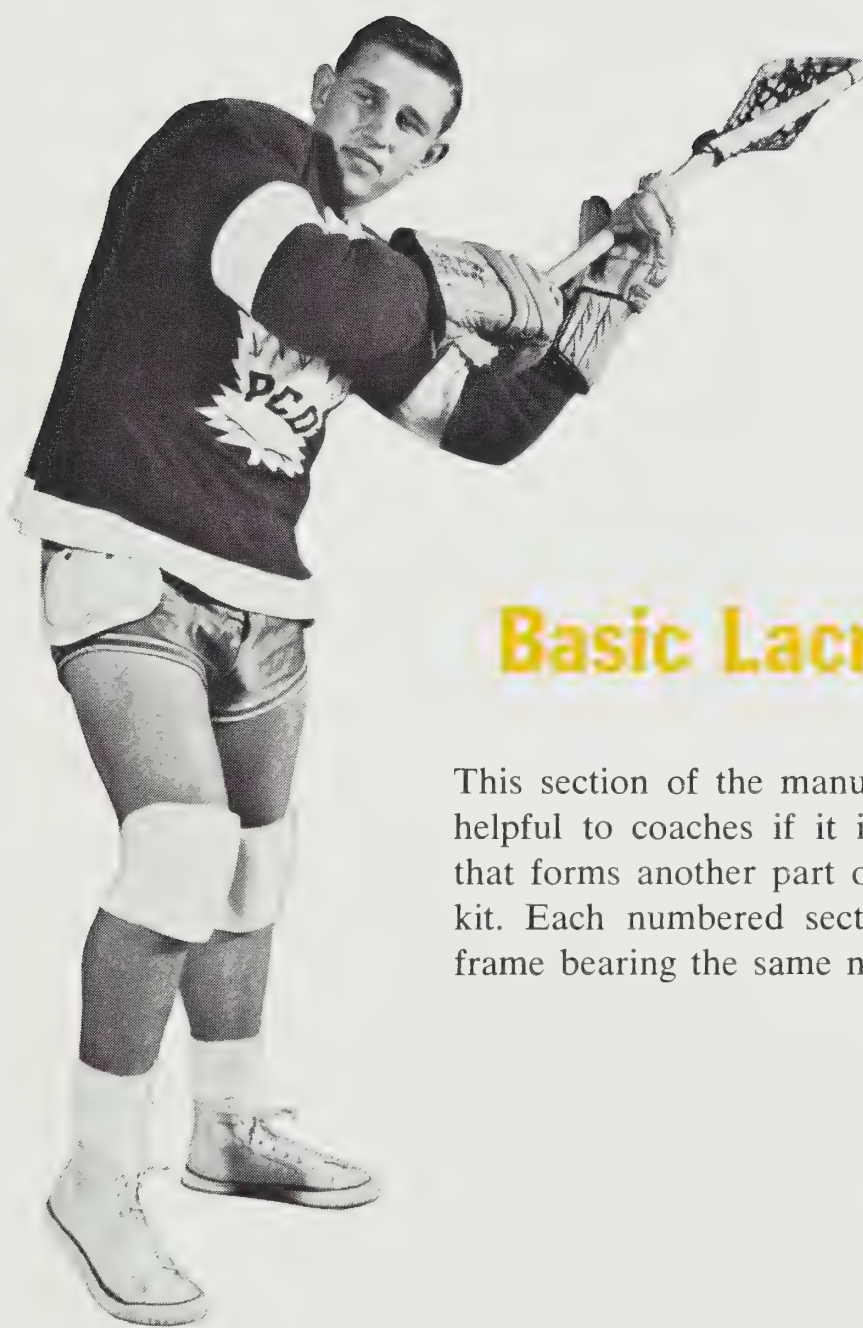
Boys, who can be introduced to the game as early as 8 or 9, enjoy it tremendously. There is something about the stick-work and teamwork, catching and throwing the ball, eluding your opponent and shooting on goal that appeals to the best athletic spirit of boys and young men.

As a conditioner, lacrosse is unsurpassed, and some athletic directors feel that this advantage alone justifies its inclusion in their sports curriculum. Because of the very fact that a stick is employed, the game develops self-control.

It is hoped that more schools will consider lacrosse as an inter-class or inter-school sport. It can add variety to the school sports program and get more boys playing a game. Community and playground programs will also benefit from inclusion of lacrosse in the sports schedule.

Give this great Canadian game half a chance – let the young fellows try it – and it will sell itself!





## Basic Lacrosse Skills

This section of the manual will prove particularly helpful to coaches if it is used with the filmstrip that forms another part of the lacrosse "How To" kit. Each numbered section relates to a filmstrip frame bearing the same number.





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## Lacrosse—A Long Tradition

Long before the white man came to North America, Indians played a game called baggataway. It was played with a wooden stick bent at the top where thongs were stretched across to form a pocket just big enough to hold a crudely fashioned ball. The stick was made of light hickory or some other wood that was strong and flexible. The ball was made of deer-skin stuffed with hair or it might be nothing more than a wooden knot cut out of a tree.

To the early French settlers, the stick resembled a bishop's crozier, or 'croisse' so they called the game "la crosse". Later in English it became lacrosse.

The game seems to have been popular among all the Indian tribes but the

rules varied. The shape of the stick, the size of the ball, the number of players, the size of the field and the goals, the length of the game — all depended upon local custom. Some games lasted from two to three days; fields might be anywhere from a few hundred feet to half a mile or more long. About the only general accepted rule: picking up or catching the ball with the hand was never permissible.

The Indians often played tribe against tribe, or village against village, with as many as 1000 taking part in a wild melee that usually resulted in serious injuries to some, and perhaps even a fatality or two. These tribal contests were more a test of endurance and manhood than a game, and were preceded by



rigorous training that might last up to two weeks. Despite all the rough play, after the contest was over the Indians never seemed to hold any grudges.

On at least one occasion the game played a major role in a conspiracy. June 4, 1763, was the King's Birthday, and at the suggestion of Chief Pontiac of the Ottawas, the British garrison at Michillimackinac were celebrating by watching an

exhibition game of the popular Indian game in a field outside the fort. The fort's gates were left open. At a moment in the game when the ball was tossed near the entrance, the Indian players dropped their sticks, seized tomahawks from under the blankets of their watching squaws and, followed by other Indian warriors who had been spectators, stormed into the fort. Almost the entire garrison was massacred.



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#### 4. A Great Spectator Sport

At one time lacrosse was Canada's most popular spectator sport. During the latter part of the 19th century and up to the early 1930's the game flourished and attracted large crowds.

There used to be great lacrosse rivalry between neighboring towns in various parts of Canada (and this still exists in some areas). The day of the big lacrosse match between two communities was generally a holiday and almost the entire populace turned out to cheer the home team.





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### 5. The Rules Prevail

Too many people today think of lacrosse as a brutal free-for-all in which just about anything goes. This idea of the game is totally incorrect. It is true that in the earlier days of lacrosse there was rough play and injuries did occur. But the game was never as dangerous as it has been painted and today's strict rules make the chance of injury in lacrosse less than in other body contact sports such as rugby, football and hockey.

### 6. Fast and Exciting

Too few people know what a fast and exciting game lacrosse can be. It is a game in which physical size is not a factor but speed, quick thinking, agility and stick-handling are all-important. Team-work, endurance, self-control and courage are also "musts".

In lacrosse the action is swift and there are few dull moments for spectator or player. The rules make for speedy play and a minimum of delays, for there are no offsides.

This great Canadian game is making a fine "comeback" as its many advantages as a sport are recognized.



6



7



## A Choice of Games

### 7. Field Lacrosse

At present there are two popular versions of the game – box and field lacrosse. It was field lacrosse that was so popular in the old days, and almost every community had its playing area. The field, 110 yards long by 60 yards wide, gives plenty of scope for running, long exciting passes and wide-open play. Sticks used in field lacrosse are longer than in box lacrosse and vary in size between offence and defence.

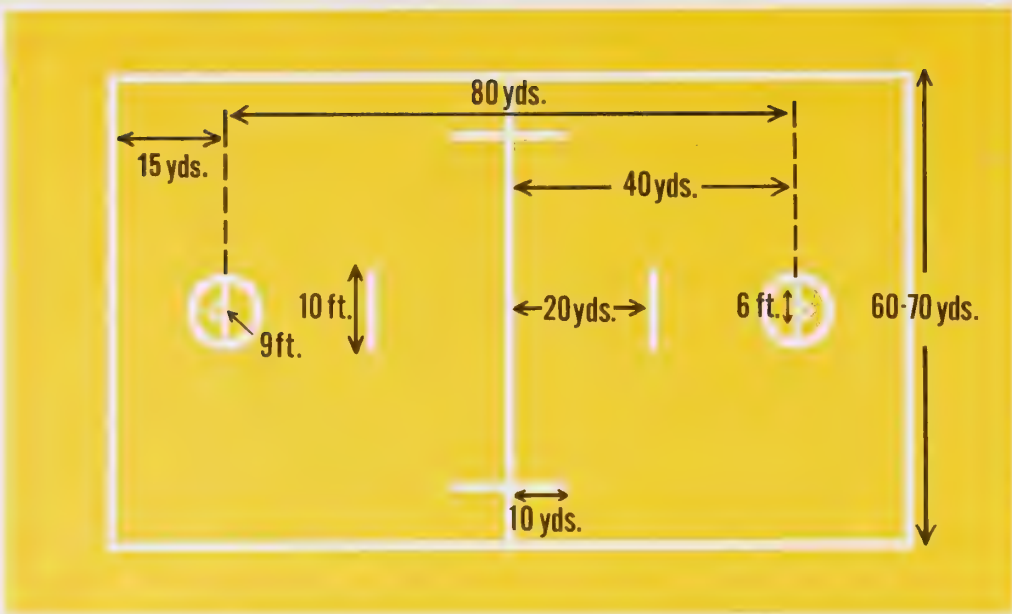
### 8. Box Lacrosse

Box lacrosse is played in outdoor “boxes” as well as in arenas and gymnasias. In Canada in recent years this version of the game has become popular. The boxes are often hockey rinks, which are of the appropriate size, have boards around the sides and often stands for spectators. The advantages of box lacrosse are: it takes less space and can be played outdoors or indoors, fewer players are required (6 compared with 10 for field lacrosse), and spectators get a better look at all the action of the game.



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### 9. Field Lacrosse Playing Area

Field lacrosse is played in an area 110 yards long by not less than 60 yards or more than 70 yards wide. The distance from goal to goal is 80 yards, with 15 yards playing area behind each goal.

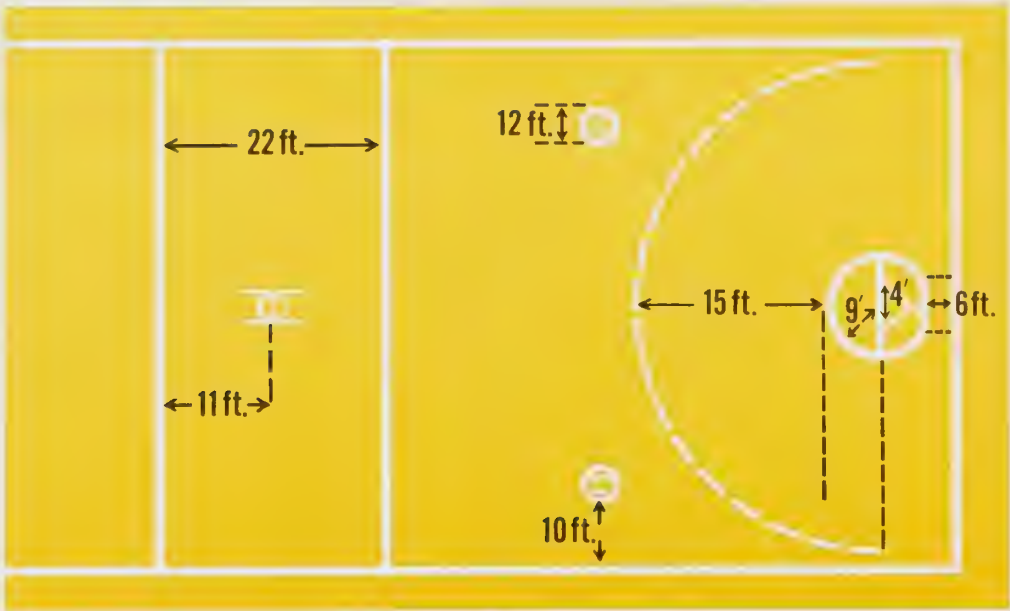
The goals are constructed out of one or two inch pipe six feet high and six feet apart. Cord netting of not more than 1½ inch mesh is fastened to a stake in the ground at a point seven feet behind the centre of the goal, forming the shape of a pyramid. A nine-foot radius circle around the goal forms the goal crease.

### 10. Box Lacrosse Playing Area

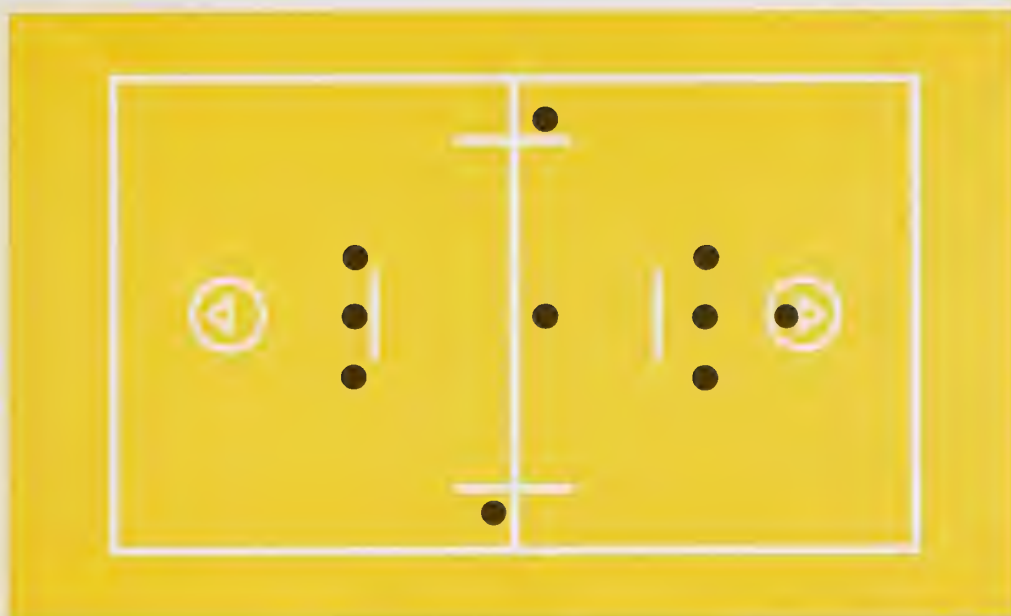
For box lacrosse the playing area is not more than 200 feet in length and 90 feet in width or less than 160 feet by 60 feet. The distance from goal to goal in a 200 foot box is 176 feet with 2 yards playing area behind each goal crease. (See diagram *Rules of Box Lacrosse*, page 16).

The goals for box lacrosse are made in the same way as for field lacrosse but they are four feet high and four feet wide. The netting is fastened at a point six feet behind the centre of the goal. The goal crease has a nine-foot radius, the same as in field lacrosse, except that the box lacrosse crease has a flat side at the rear of the net.

10







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### 11. Field Lacrosse Line-up

The line-up for field lacrosse comprises ten players in the following positions; goaltender; three defence players – point, cover point, and first defence; three midfield players – second defence, centre and second attack; three attack players – first attack, out-home and in-home.

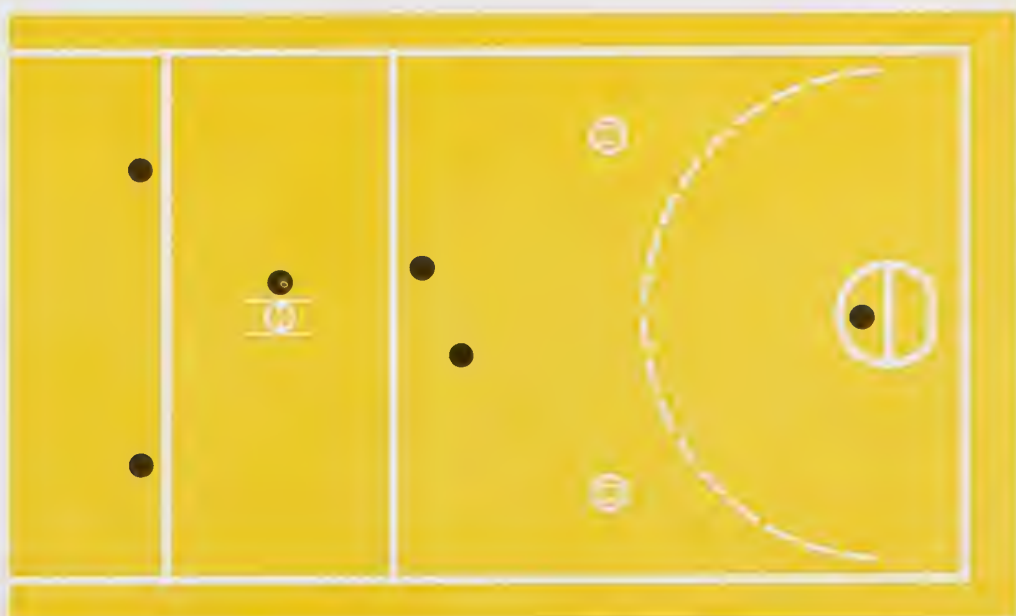
The diagram shows the position of each of these players at the start of the game. Once the game begins, the players can move anywhere on the field, with one exception: three attack men and four defence players must always remain on their respective side of the centre line.

### 12. Box Lacrosse Line-up

The line-up for box lacrosse comprises six players in the following positions: goalkeeper; two defence players – right defence and left defence; centre; two attack players – right forward and left forward.

The diagram shows the usual position of each of these players at the start of the game. Once the game begins, the players can move anywhere within the box or floor and, unlike field lacrosse, there are no restrictions of movement on any player.

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## Equipment

*As in all sports, good equipment is essential for good play.*



13

### 14. Lacrosse Sticks are Handmade

Lacrosse sticks are handmade by Indian craftsmen from carefully selected hickory. A tree has to be of a certain age and size or the wood will not bend properly. From six to eight frames can be obtained from each butt, the only part of the tree which is suitable. A very high percentage of the lacrosse sticks used in Canada and abroad are made by Indian employees of the Chisholm Lacrosse Manufacturing Company, located on the St. Regis reserve near Cornwall, Ontario. Sticks are also made at the Six Nations Iroquois reserve at Ohsweken, Ontario.

The stick, measured inside the wood, is from 42 to 46 inches in length and from 5 to 12 inches in width. The goal-

keeper's stick has a larger pocket which may be not more than 18 inches in width.

### 15. Care of Stick

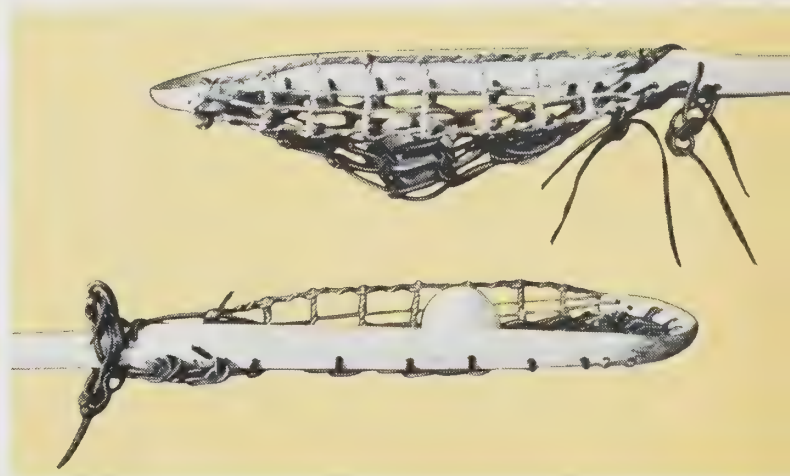
The depth of the pocket should be adjusted according to the individual's ability to catch and throw. The best way to "work in" a pocket is to play catch against a wall until the leather stretches into proper shape.

A lacrosse stick may take as long as three weeks to be worked into proper shape for the individual player. It should then last from two to four years if given proper care.

The gut guard on the left side of the stick is controlled by two leather thongs which should be loosened each time the stick is put away.



GOALKEEPER'S STICK



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16

## 16. General Equipment

Protective pads are worn in competition and in practice. The shoulder pads used are often hockey harness plus padding the length of each arm; kidney pads are similar to those worn by football players; knee pads to prevent abrasions from falls and provide knee support are the same as basketball players use, as are the running shoes and heavy socks. Either

basketball or hockey-style shorts are worn, depending upon the player's preference. Gloves are usually the same as worn in hockey. Lacrosse players like a pliable, flexible glove which enables them to handle the stick easily and they often cut out the glove palm so that they can "get the feel of the stick" and better control. A long-sleeved sweater completes the outfit.



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## 17. Goalkeeper's Equipment

The goalkeeper uses special equipment to provide protection from the solid rubber lacrosse ball which travels at speeds up to 120 miles per hour. In addition to the shoulder pads worn by other members of the team, he wears a face mask, a chest protector and shin guards – often the same as worn by a baseball catcher or of similar design. Heavy pants – often football pants or long, hockey pants – are also worn. As in hockey, a goalkeeper's gloves are a little heavier than those worn by his teammates.

## 18. Always Wear a Helmet

Accidents can happen. Always wear a helmet. While helmets were not formerly worn in Canadian lacrosse, there is a trend to their use today, in the same way that protective headgear has grown more popular in other sports. Since the natural position of the stick extends over the shoulders, headgear is important to prevent accidents. Helmets are mandatory in all C.L.A. playdowns.

Form-fitting plastic helmets of light weight are now available, as well as those made of leather. It is advisable also to wear teeth guards that can be attached to the plastic helmet.



18





## Stick-handling

**19.** The ability to handle the lacrosse stick effectively is, of course, the basic skill of lacrosse. Players must learn to hold it correctly, pick up the ball, shoot, pass, catch, carry the ball. They must also know how to use the stick for checking.

### 20. How to hold the Stick

It is important that the stick be held correctly. A player that shoots left handed places his left hand palm up near the "Y" and his right hand palm down at the end of the stick. (Hands about ten inches apart). The upper hand may be moved to different positions depending upon the individual player and whether he is shooting, catching or picking up the ball. For right-handed players, the hand positions



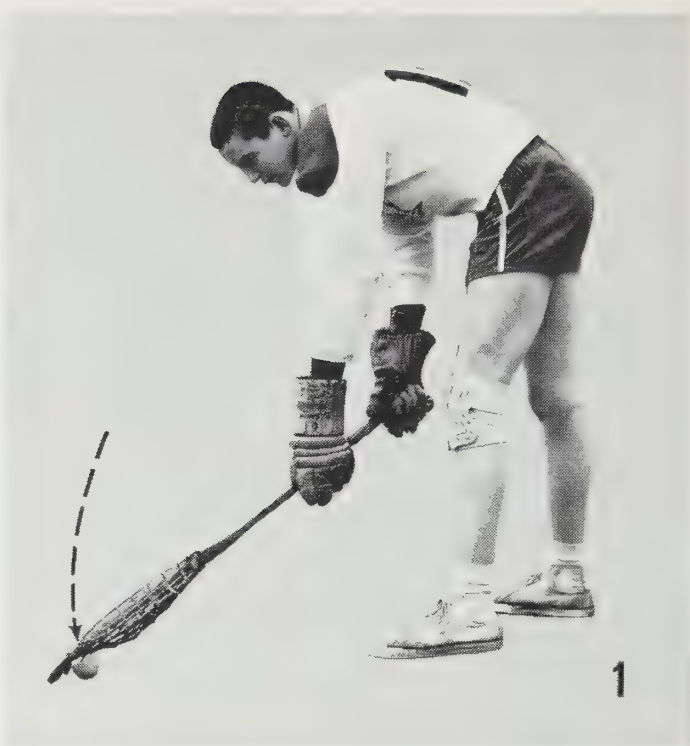
are reversed. It is a decided advantage for the player to practise using either position of holding the stick.

### 21. The Scoop Pickup

The Scoop Pickup is widely used. With both hands on the stick, the player scoops up the ball. It is dangerous to use one hand because this makes it harder to scoop properly and the stick handle is left exposed to a possible check. Players should be careful *not* to hold the butt of the stick directly in front of the stomach when executing the shovel pickup. The mouth of the stick may jam into the floor surface and cause the butt to jab the abdomen. Usually the scoop pick-up is used on the dead run when there is no time to use any other methods.







22

## 22. The Trap and Scoop Pickup

The Trap and Scoop Pickup is probably the better way to pick up the ball. The stick is placed on top of the ball to stop any movement (Fig. 1), and then pulled back so that the ball flips into the pocket (Fig. 2). The motion is similar to that used with a tennis racquet and ball. Both hands should be kept on the stick, if possible.

## 23. The Indian Pickup

The Indian Pickup is used only by the more proficient players. Inverting the stick first, with a very fast motion the player hits the ball with the wood of his stick and, with a twisting, half-circular movement, captures the ball in the pocket. This method is useful especially in a scramble, enabling the player to reach into the mix-up with one hand on the stick and coming up with the ball.

23





# Shooting and Passing

## 24. The Overhand Shot

The Overhand Shot is the most accurate. In this as in other lacrosse shots, the same arm and body movements are used as in throwing a baseball. However, the lacrosse shot is more difficult because it is harder to manipulate the ball in the stick than it is in the hand.

With the overhand shot, the player moves the stick from a horizontal position, up and back. In the illustration a left-handed player is shown. His right hand is drawn to the left side of the body, not much higher than the original level, and remaining fairly close. The stick is now at an angle, with the pocket above and behind his left shoulder. To make the shot, the player aims the face of the stick at the receiving player, brings his left hand forward and at the same time moves his right hand slightly downward and back towards his body. His right foot comes forward with his left arm, his body bends slightly and, as the ball leaves the stick, the left arm is extended to its full length with the stick pointing directly at the receiver. The whole shooting motion uses both body and arms in a smooth, co-ordinated movement. The beginner should be careful to avoid grasping the stick too high with the top hand.

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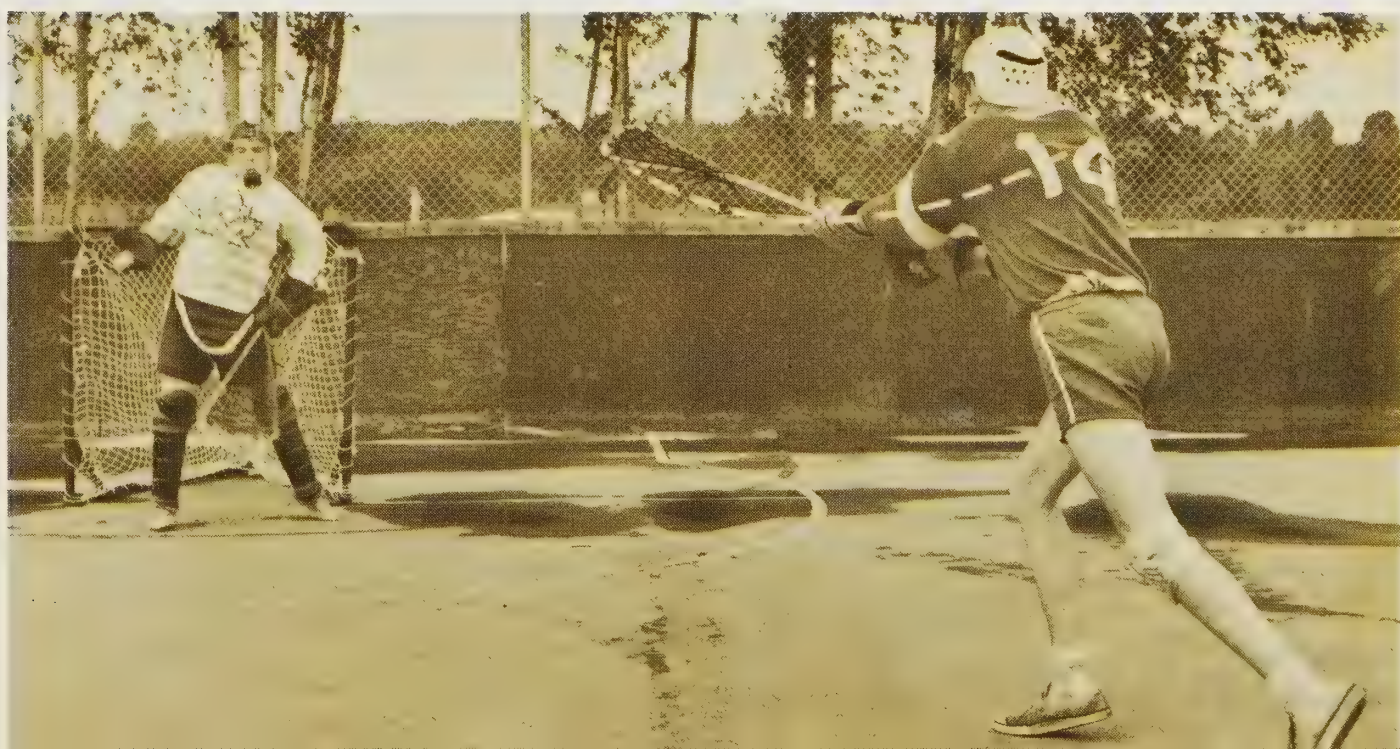


Gripping will develop a “glass arm” which results in a stiff, awkward throwing motion.

## 25. The Sidearm Shot

The Sidearm Shot is harder and less accurate. It involves the same foot and body movements as the overarm throw. With the stick in a horizontal or semi-horizontal position, the right hand (of right-handed players) propels it forward from the side and the left hand pulls in close to the body.

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## 26. The Underhand Shot

The most deceptive shots are the Underhand and the "Over-the-Shoulder" Shot. The underhand shot gives a lot of speed and deception because it can go low or rise, but it is not easy to be accurate with it. It is made usually from a long way out, or from a standing position in which the player can wind up for a hard shot on goal.

## 27. The Over-the-Shoulder Shot

The Over-the-Shoulder Shot is probably the most difficult shot to master but, when perfected, it can be used effectively to confuse the goalkeeper. The attacking player is carrying his stick in a normal position. While making a play he gets almost past the goal and may seem to have lost his chance to shoot. At this point he can make an over-the-shoulder shot which the goalkeeper may not expect.

27







28

## Catching the Ball

**28.** The stick is extended so that the pocket faces the oncoming ball and the player steps forward to meet the ball. Usually it is better to catch the ball while running in order to avoid being checked. It is easier to make a catch while going to meet the ball, but sometimes when the ball is being returned by a defenceman the catch must be made while running away from the passer. The ability to catch the ball while either standing or running – in many different positions – and while being closely checked – is vitally important.

The stick is allowed to “give” a little at the moment of impact to reduce the ball’s impetus. At the same time the player, with a slight twisting motion of both wrists, nestles the ball securely in the pocket. Right-handed players catch the ball on the right side above the shoulders, twisting the pocket inward. If the ball is

between shoulders and knees, the pocket is twisted upwards; if the ball is below the knees, it is twisted outwards. Left-handed players catch the ball on the left side, with similar movements.

Once the ball is caught, it is important that it remain securely in the pocket while the player runs with it. To do this the player holds the stick in a semi-horizontal position with the pocket slightly higher. He “cradles” the ball by bending his arms at the elbows and moving the stick gently with an up-and-down arm motion which comes naturally as he runs. A slight twisting motion with the wrists ensures that the ball remains in the pocket. Practice with this method will enable a player to “sense” the presence of the ball in the pocket without looking for it. The ball and the stick become one for the experienced player.





29

## 29. Carrying the Ball

There are many ways to carry the ball depending on the situation and individual abilities. The first essential for the beginner to learn is to keep two hands on the stick. Carrying the stick with one hand, the player cannot possibly have complete control of the ball and he leaves himself wide open for a check.

When being closely checked, the player should have a short grip on the stick and should carry it close to the body. A player usually develops his own stick movements to avoid being checked and anticipates when and where his opponent is going to hit his stick. When preparing to pass or shoot, or on a breakaway, the stick should be in the shooting position.

# Checking

## 30. The Cross Check

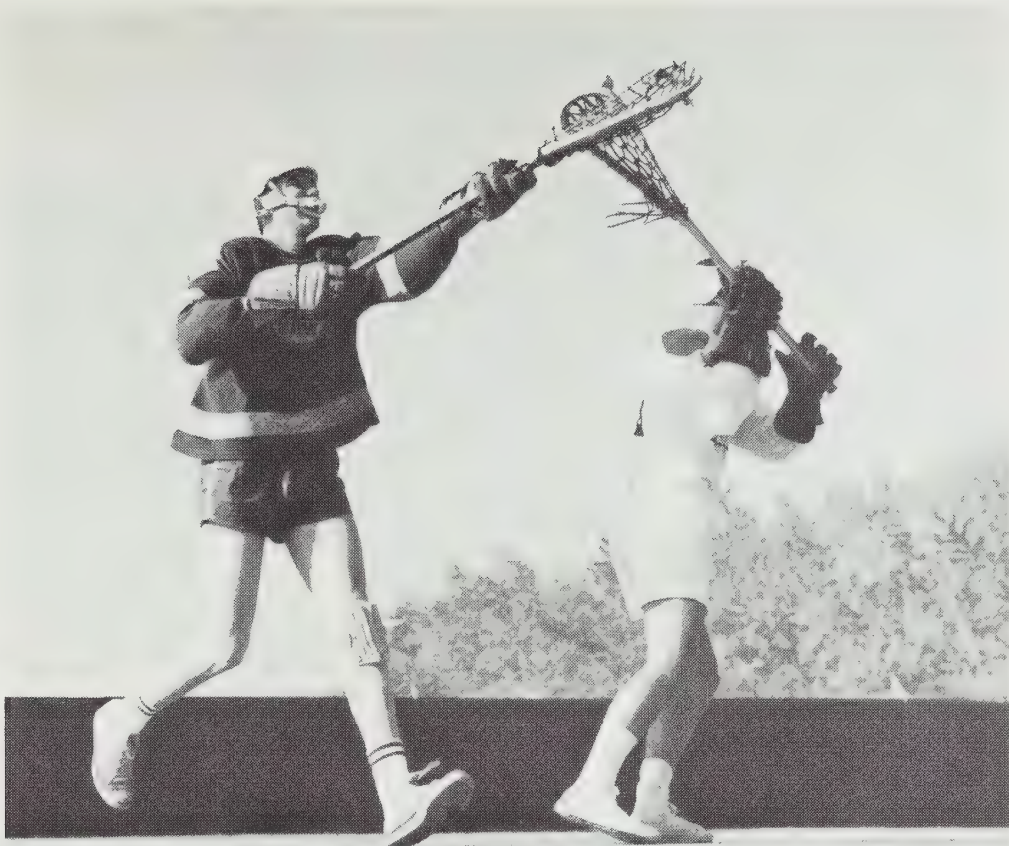
The cross check must be applied between the shoulders and the hips – preferably the upper arm area. The stick is held firmly with the two hands about 16 inches apart, with the open face of the

stick toward the opponent. Once the contact is made, the check is carried out with a pushing motion. “Chopping” at the arm of the opposing player is not allowed – contact must always be made first, before the pushing motion begins.

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### 31. The Stick Check

A stick check is used to prevent the opposing player from catching a pass, or jar the ball loose from his stick, or prevent him from obtaining possession of a loose ball. The best time to employ this check is just before the opposing player has caught the ball so that he never gains possession. The check may be made by hitting down or hitting up, depending upon circumstances.

### 32. The Body Check

The body check is used to slow down a fast-moving ball carrier. Unlike hockey, a player may not hip check or drop down in front of his opponent. Body check in lacrosse refers to a solid shoulder check (not a charge) to slow down the ball carrier.



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## Intercepting

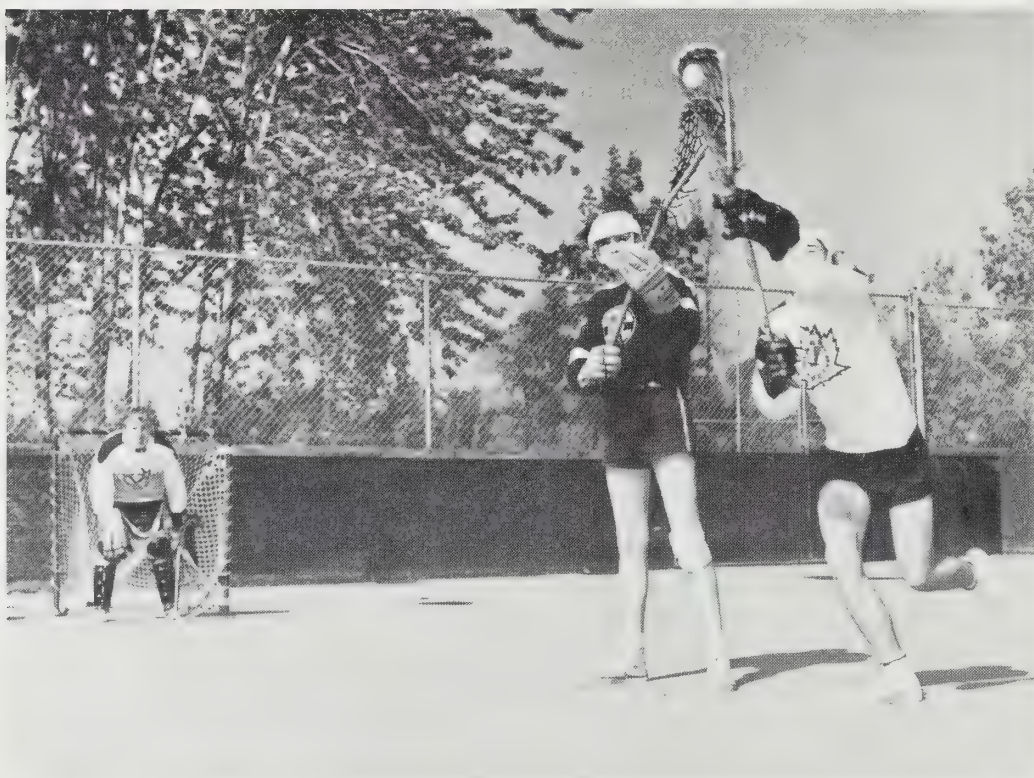
### 33. The Position of the Stick

Always keep the open side of your stick in the path of your opponent's shot. Thus you are in a position to catch the ball, if possible. Also, keep the stick at chest level or higher when on defence to help make interceptions.

### 34. An Important Skill

Intercepting passes is a skill that every player should strive to perfect. It calls for alert thinking and the ability to anticipate the pass of the opposing player, without making the interception move too soon or too obvious. Great speed is required to dart forward just before or as the pass is made. An interception is a spectacular play and often leads to a clear breakaway.

34







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## The Face-off

**35.** Facing off is a skill that must be developed by frequent and patient practice. If you can capture the ball at the face-off, you have an immediate advantage – the chance to score. As all players on the team, except the goalkeeper, may have to take part in a face-off at some stage of the game, it is important for this skill to be mastered by everyone except the goalie. In facing off, the two players assume a crouch position opposite each other with their sticks flat on the playing surface, the backs of the pockets overlapping slightly. The stick is held firmly with one hand at the “Y” of the pocket and the other hand 12” to 18” farther

down the stick. The referee places the ball between the sticks, in the centre, and when both players are ready he blows his whistle for the draw.

Every player through practice develops his most effective method of getting the ball. Usually the stick is pulled backward and upward to direct the ball to the left where the player or a teammate can gain possession. If the opposing player is discovered to be stronger, sometimes it is a good tactic to move the stick back in the same direction as his and try to direct the ball to a teammate.





36

## Practice Makes Perfect

**36.** Long hours of practice are necessary to perfect these skills. Catching and throwing are the two basic requirements in lacrosse and these can be learned by “playing catch” with another player – or if you are alone by throwing at a spot on a wall and catching the rebounds. The coach of your team will have his own methods of teaching these skills.

### 37. Skills make for Thrills

If the team is to win, each individual must be able to do all things well. The thrill of a well-executed shot on goal – of an accurate pass – of a swift interception – of an almost impossible catch – of an effective check – can be the thrill every player enjoys when he plays this great Canadian game.



37



## The Finer Points



## Offence

Offensive play in lacrosse calls for speed, adept stickhandling, aggressiveness, deception, ability to size up a situation quickly and take advantage of it.

Because lacrosse, more than most games, is a game of constant movement, attacking players can seldom figure out too much in advance what play they are going to use to attempt to score. They must be quick to improvise, to use the

play the opening suggests. Because there are no offsides, maneuverability is very important.

The following plays are given as examples; they are not, by any means, a complete catalogue of lacrosse offensive strategy. Many of them seem simple but they nevertheless require a high degree of skill to make them work effectively.





## Fast Break Play

Because there are no offsides in lacrosse, there are plenty of opportunities for a fast break to catch the defence off guard.

This play can start when the goal-keeper passes to a teammate who is speeding along the side or down the centre of the playing area towards the goal. To catch the pass, the player usually has to get behind the defence.

A similar play can start from the face-off at centre.



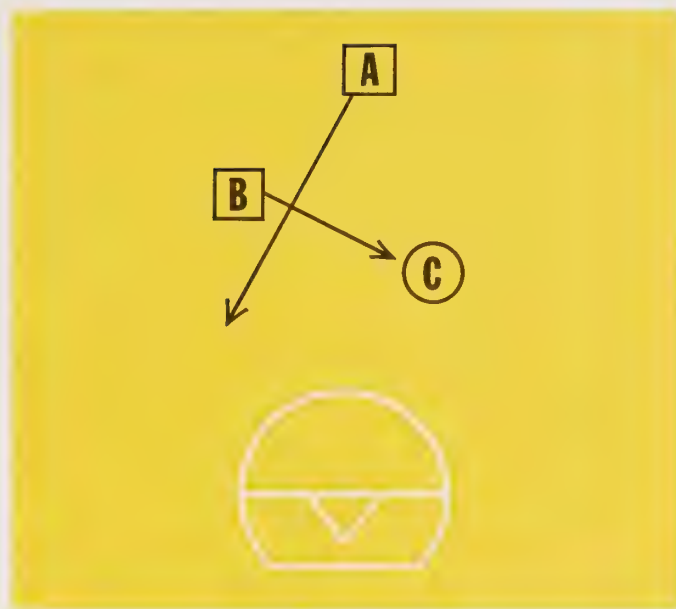
Or it can start from an interception.

Catching the attacking team well up in their territory, two or three players immediately take off at top speed towards the other team's goal and one of them catches a pass from the interceptor, giving him a clear shot on goal.



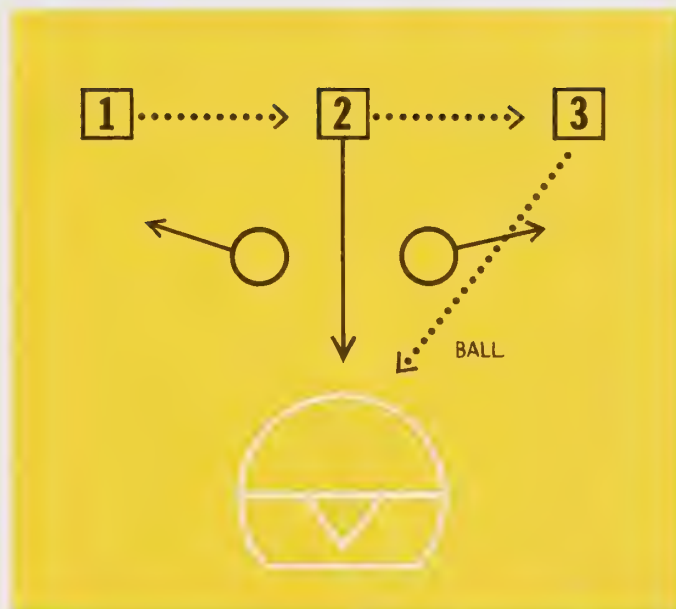
## Block Play

This is a 2 on 1 play to clear the way for a shot on goal. As player A with ball runs towards goal, teammate B steps in front of defence player C to block him out of play while A runs past to get his shot on goal. B must establish the block before A starts his drive toward the goal and B must be standing still in front of C or interference will be called.



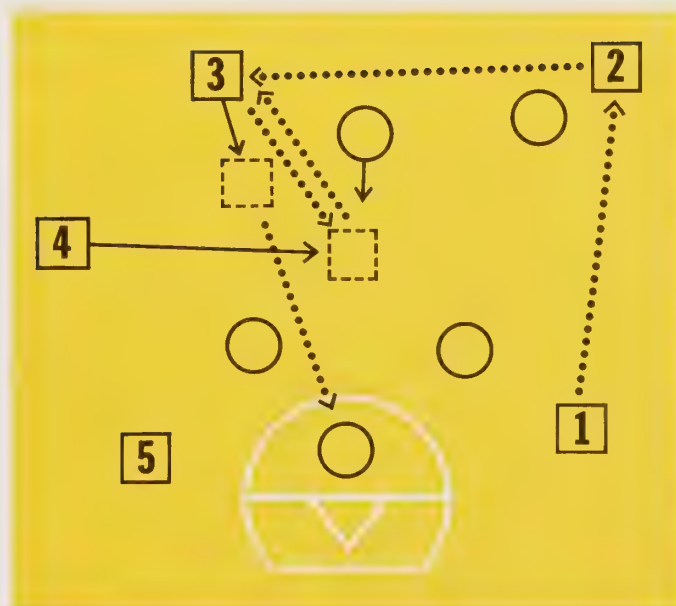
## Odd Man Play

This play can be used when there is an odd man advantage with the attacking team. Three players get a breakaway against two and as they get closer to the goal they spread out to put pressure on the defence. 1 passes to 2, who passes to 3. The defence moves out to check 1 and 3, and 2 moves in front of goal. 3 passes to 2 who gets a clear shot on goal.

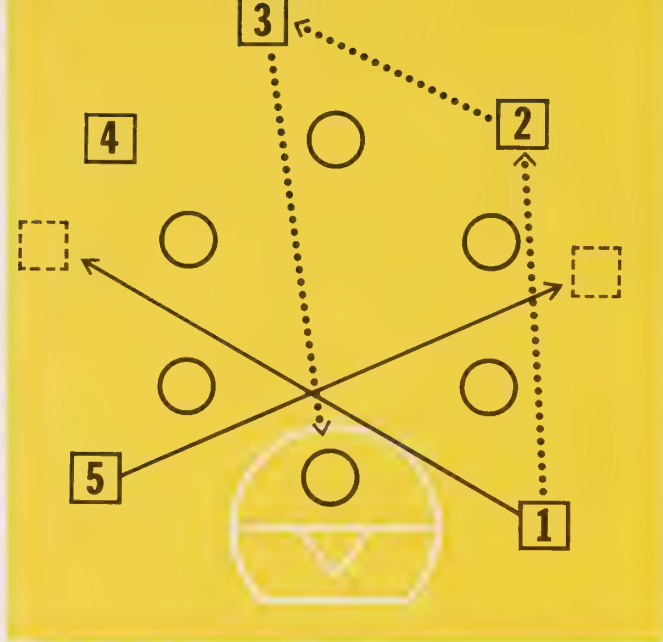


## Attacking against Zone Defence

A play that can be used to break up a zone defence is to have one attacker who is not carrying the ball move into the centre of the zone defence. The ball is then passed to him (a bounce pass is very effective). As the defensive players close in on him, he passes back out to his own player who, by now, is in closer to goal and gets a better shot.

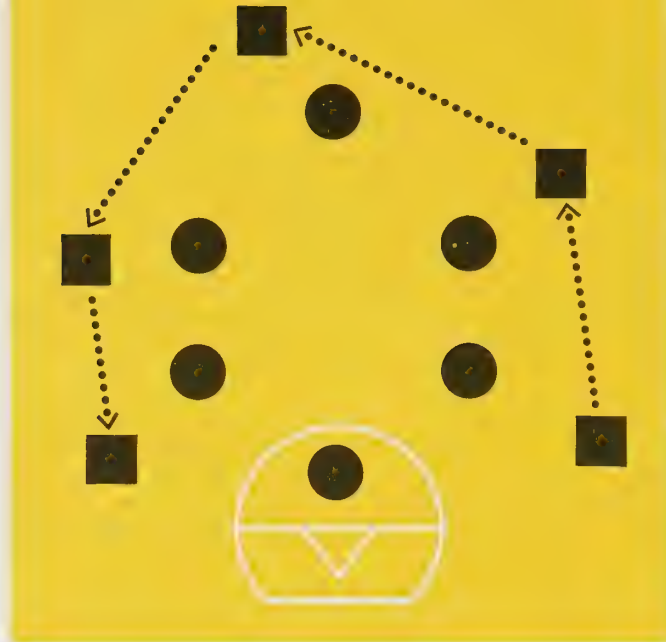






**Criss-Cross**

The attacking player carrying the ball moves into the corner near the goal. He passes to centre player and as centre player shoots on goal two of his teammates criss-cross in front of the goal. This gives him three chances to score – a screen shot which the goalkeeper may not see, a deflected shot, or one of the criss-crossing players can catch the ball and shoot on goal himself.



**Circle Play**

In this play the ball is passed in a circle when the attacking players get into the defence area of the opposing team in an effort to get a man clear on the edge of the crease for a shot on goal.

**Pass from Corner**

The attacking player carries the ball up the floor along one side and goes for the corner near the goal.

Two teammates move towards the goal with their checks near them. The first player runs right through to the end of the floor, with the second player following close behind. The ball is passed to

the second player who usually gets a shot on goal if he makes his move quickly.

In all these plays split second timing, accurate passing and sharp catching are especially important. For instance, when a player without the ball steps quickly past his check, the player with the ball must pass with lightning speed (he will be free for seconds only); the pass must be deadly accurate, and the catch made deftly on the run.







## Defence

Defensive play is just as important as offensive play. Unless a team can make it difficult for the opposing side to score, the goals it scores will probably be insufficient to win.

Playing defence demands alertness and quick thinking – the ability to anticipate offensive plays.

Some basics of defensive play include:

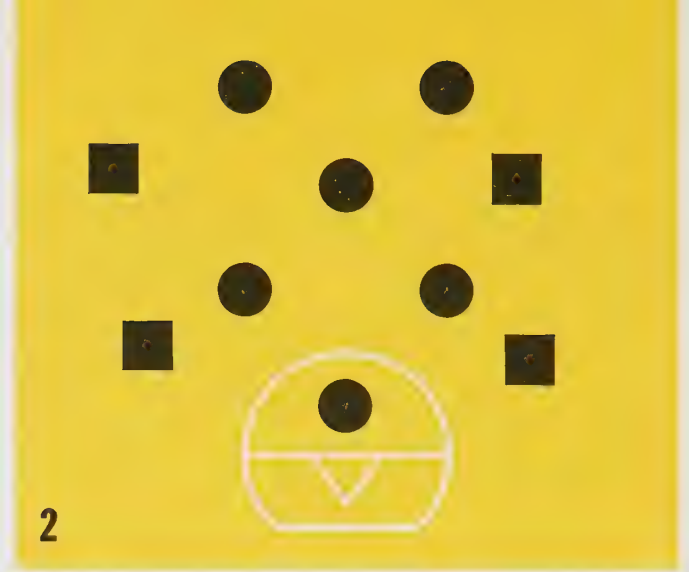
- Always face the play.
- Always try to stay between your check and your goal.
- Keep your stick ready to hit an opponent's stick within reach.
- Be ready to retrieve loose balls.
- Check your opponent's stick as he is about to catch the ball (often it is easier to check a player *before* he catches the ball).
- Be alert for interception opportunities.

- Use the cross check or body check to prevent an opposing player from getting set for his shot on goal.
- Know how to retain possession of the ball when your team is short-handed due to a penalty.
- Switch checks if a block is pulled when checking man-to-man.
- Worry the man with the ball, forcing him to drop back and, if possible, knock the ball from his stick.

There are two methods of organizing defensive play. "Man-to-Man" is usually employed when both teams are at full strength. It is also used when the defending team has a man advantage over the team with the ball, enabling the defending team to put two men on the ball carrier.

"Zone" is usually employed by a team when it is short-handed. However, some teams use zone defence consistently because they play it better.





Here are four main variations of Zone defence:

### (1) Box Zone

If the team is short-handed by penalty, the box zone is often used with two defenders spaced about ten feet in front of two other defenders to form a box in front of the goal. The four players should shift together, never leaving too much space between them, and sticks should be kept up in a position ready to intercept.

### (2) Five-man 2-1-2

With this defence five players form a box or square with a man in the centre. This enables the defence to spread out more and stop opponents from moving into the centre for a direct shot on goal.

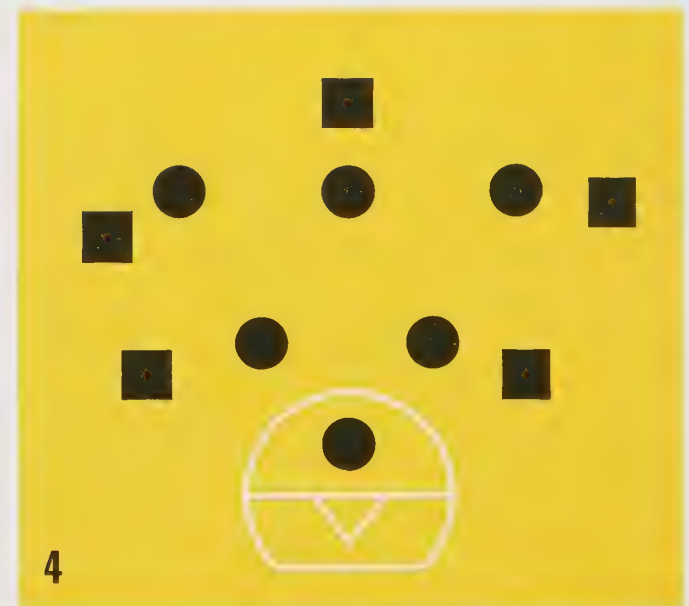
### (3) Five-man 1-2-2

This formation has four players forming a box with the fifth player (rover) out in front to rush the attacking player so that he cannot get a shot on goal. The rover moves back and forth in front of the box to prevent the attacker from getting set to shoot.

### (4) Five-man 3-1-1

This variation of the 1-2-2 permits the formation to spread out more in front of the defence zone. This would be the better zone defence against teams with accurate, long, hard shots.

One simple and very effective defensive play is used frequently when the attacking team is short-handed. The man-to-man defence is used, with two players checking the ball carrier for possession.







## Goalkeeping

The goalkeeper has a key position on the lacrosse team. Even more than in hockey, his skill can make the difference between a game won or lost.

His unique importance derives from the fact that he not only stops shots on goal but (unlike hockey) he often takes part in the defence and sets up attacking plays.

The goalkeeper is permitted to deflect or catch the ball with his hand while he is in the crease but when he steps out of the crease he becomes just another player and must not touch the ball with his hand. To receive a pass he must step out of the crease or he is penalized by having the ball faced off in the circle near the goal.

His usual position in goal is about one foot in front, directly facing the attacking player carrying the ball. To protect the goal area as much as possible, he usually holds the stick with one hand at one side, using his body and his other hand to add to his blocking potential. The only time he uses two hands on his stick

is when he passes the ball up the floor. He changes position constantly as the ball is passed back and forth and as the attacking player maneuvers towards him, so that he always faces the attacker.

When the attacking player is behind the goal, the goalkeeper stands erect at the corner of the goal which is nearest the ball – about two feet out and always facing the ball carrier.

If the shot is in the air, the goalkeeper catches it in the same way as any other player, allowing his stick to give slightly with the ball's impact, and at the same time giving it a slight twist.

If the shot is a bounce shot or on the ground, he brings his legs together with the heels touching and the toes pointing outwards as he makes the stop with his stick in front of him. The whole motion is combined with a small backward slide, without taking his feet off the ground.

For bounce shots and long shots he may move out near the edge of the crease. This often enables him to stop a bounce shot before it hits the floor or immediately



after impact – and on a long shot it enables him to cut down the open area of the goal.

When play gets into the goalkeeper's area, he has much more to do than just stop shots.

If he catches a shot on goal, he must be ready either to pass the ball to a teammate or carry the ball himself part way up the field until he can find an opportunity to pass. Often his alertness in making a pass to an open player will lead to a quick scoring chance. And the sudden long pass to a teammate on the dead run towards the opponent's goal is one of the most spectacular and effective offensive plays in lacrosse.

Similarly, in clearing around his net the goalkeeper can play a vital role. He may have to go after a loose ball, especially if it is behind his goal, but of course he never leaves his goal unprotected unless he has a good chance to recover the ball. Sometimes by alert play he can intercept a pass near the goal to an open teammate. He must be alert to control rebounds off himself and off the boards near the goal to prevent opposing players from gaining possession.

The goalkeeper, in other words, has a much wider field of action than just keeping the ball out of his own net. The greater his skill, the more value he will be to his team on defence and offence.







SLASHING



CHARGING

## Some Important Don'ts

In Lacrosse, as in all sports, there are certain methods of play that are forbidden, and for which penalties are given by the referee. The Rule Book of the Canadian Lacrosse Association describes these fully. A few of the more important "don'ts" of lacrosse play are illustrated.

### Slashing

Don't swing your stick and hit an opponent on the body. This is called "slashing".

### Charging

Don't run at a player and bump into him from behind. This is called "charging".

### Wraparound

Don't stop the forward motion of an opposing player by putting your arm and/or stick around him from behind. This is called a "wraparound".

### Hip Check

Don't use a cross body block. This is called a "hip check" or tripping. Body checks must be made with the shoulder in an upright position.

### Boarding

Don't push or hold the ball carrier (or any other player) against the boards. This is called "boarding".

WRAPAROUND



HIP CHECK



BOARDING







## Team Training and Practice

Every lacrosse coach will have his own methods of developing individual skills and team play. The following ideas for team training and practice are merely suggestions. It is assumed that the players have some experience with lacrosse and have already mastered the basics of the game – how to catch, throw and pass.

In training to play lacrosse, the first step is to develop a high degree of physical fitness. As in most sports, a lacrosse team in top shape can often defeat a better team that has not paid sufficient attention to conditioning.

A conditioning program might include the following steps. At the beginning of the season, encourage plenty of free running in shorts and running shoes, without lacrosse sticks.

Next step is to don full lacrosse dress and run, increasing the circuits each practice period. Follow with stops and starts from end to end of the arena, controlled by the coach's whistle. Practice zig-zag

running, jogging and then sudden bursts of speed. Calisthenics should also be a part of the conditioning program.

After a number of practice sessions, devoted entirely to conditioning, practice with lacrosse sticks can begin. Players should line up on each side of the arena, at least ten feet apart, facing each other. Pass the ball back and forth, up and down the line, from player to opposite player. First use one ball, then use two or more balls to speed things up.

The various passes can be all practiced with this system – bounce, overhand, underhand, sidearm, backhand. In addition to its value in teaching the use of the lacrosse stick, this type of practice is useful for breaking in lacrosse sticks. Also, it enables each player to adjust the pocket strings to suit his preference so that he can catch and throw as accurately as possible.

To develop skill in throwing and catching, two or three players at a time



can run up and down the arena passing the ball to each other. They should switch positions regularly so that the ability to throw and catch from different positions and different sides is learned.

To combine passing and catching practice with shooting on goal, line the players up in single file at one end of the arena, with the goalkeeper in position at the other end, and a player standing in front of the goal. Players in the line-up take turns running at top speed towards the goal, passing to the player who shoots on goal. Or they run towards the goal, take the pass from the player near the goal, and shoot.

Many variations of this kind of practice are possible. One player can run towards the goal and have a second player pass ahead to him on the dead run to set up a shot on goal; or the player receiving the pass can cut from the corner and shoot on goal as he crosses about 15 feet in front of the goalkeeper; or the passer can stand near the side and pass to the player running towards the goal from the centre area (this teaches the passer to throw the ball in front of the receiver so that he can catch it easily on the dead run – sometimes six inches on an opponent is enough to enable the attacking

player to catch the ball and get a shot on goal).

An important play in lacrosse is the long pass from the goalkeeper to a fast-breaking teammate in order to catch the defence napping. This can be practised by having the goalkeeper pass to players running full speed up the floor.

After a series of practices of this kind the coach usually begins the selection of players for different positions. Then come the practice scrimmages which can be every bit as hard as actual games because the players are all trying to gain a place on the team. Simple plays are developed next and, as the players improve, more difficult plays. Finally, the coach is ready to assemble lines and combinations of players and practice the fine points of the game – how to beat a zone defence, how to mount a power play, how to block legally, how to roll, how to use change of pace to beat a defender, and so on.

While it is true that anyone with some athletic ability can learn the fundamentals of lacrosse, coaches often find that good hockey players have a natural affinity for the game. Perhaps this is because the strategy is somewhat the same, and both games place a premium on good stick handling.







## Refereeing

As in all competitive sports, good refereeing is absolutely essential for good lacrosse play. Players, of course, must know the rules of the game and obey them. Spectators will enjoy the game more if they know the rules and understand why penalties have been given.

The Rules for Box Lacrosse are published in booklet form by the Canadian Lacrosse Association. Every member of the team should have his own copy of the rules and be thoroughly familiar with them.

There are two referees for a lacrosse game. One keeps on top of the play and the other watches for infractions of other players on the floor. Referees must be in top physical condition because they often run farther in a game than the players.

If you would like to be a lacrosse referee, apply to your local lacrosse as-

sociation. It is not essential to have played lacrosse but, of course, knowledge of the game and decision-making ability are required. Common sense and good judgment are vital.

Here are some suggestions for referees:

1. Be completely impartial – never try to even up the penalties.
2. Be consistent throughout a game – this will help the game and have a bearing on the type of lacrosse played.
3. Know the rule book thoroughly – then you'll never be at a loss no matter what the situation.
4. Be on top of the play at all times.
5. Demand (and earn) respect from the players at all times.





## Lacrosse as a Sport for Boys and Teen-agers

Lacrosse is an ideal game for boys and teen-agers, and it can make a valuable addition to the sports program of high schools.

Its advantages are many. Size does not matter as skill is the factor which makes the difference. Boys enjoy the game because it is fun and highly competitive. It is basically a simple game. It is a great conditioner because there is so much running. Equipment costs are low. It can be played in all kinds of weather.

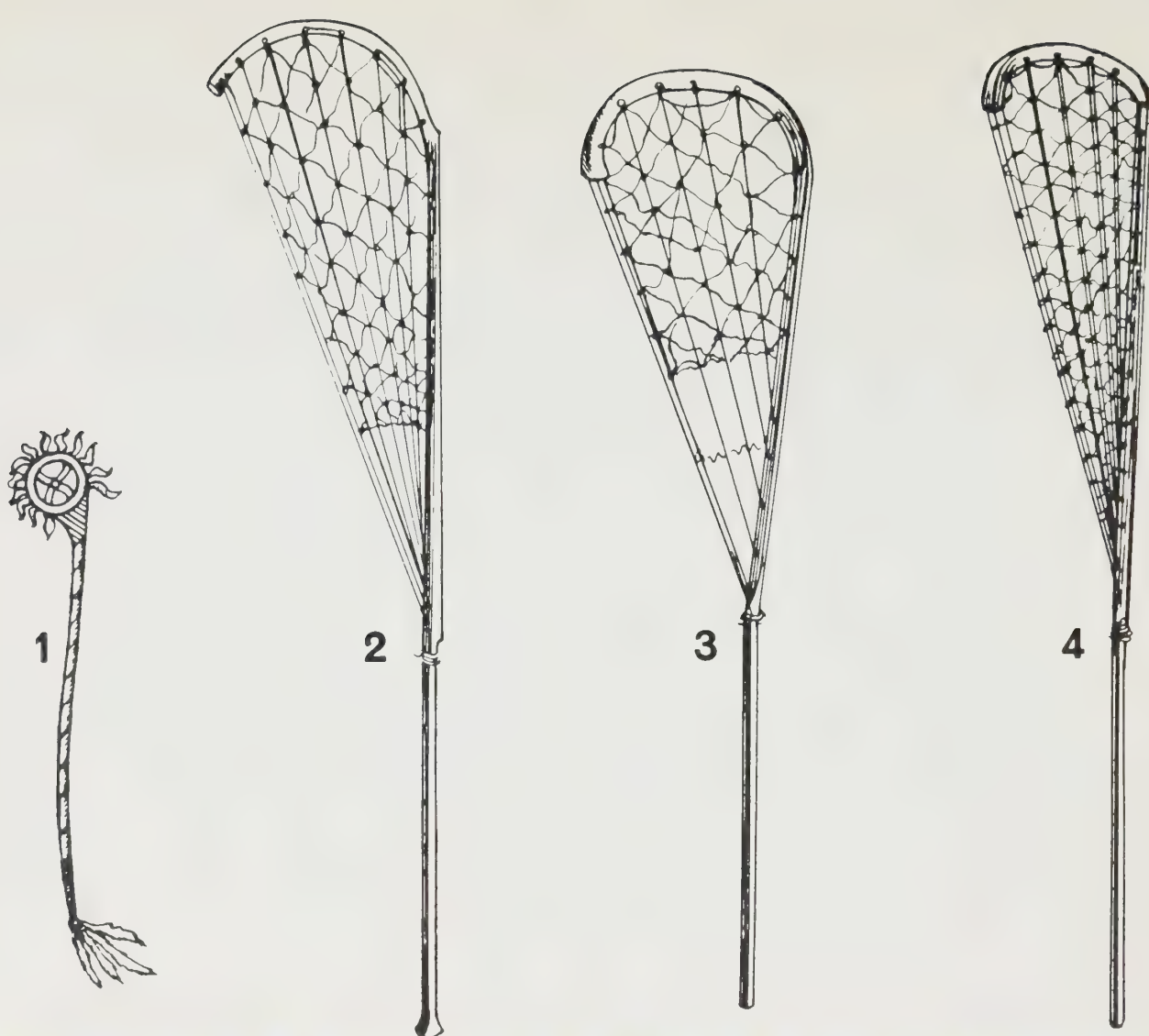
Contrary to general belief, lacrosse is not a dangerous sport and the injury factor in the game is not great – definitely less than it is for many other body contact sports. Probably because the players carry sticks and wave them around freely, it may look rough – but most injuries are minor. As far as it is known, there has never been a fatality attributed to the game.

Lacrosse requires teamwork, self-control, good condition, bodily coordination, courage – and it is an excellent way of developing these qualities in boys and teen-agers. It demands quick thinking. No two situations that arise in a game are exactly the same. To be successful, a player must use his head as well as his body.

A well-known sports authority has said: “Lacrosse, when properly played, has no superior among athletic contests, as a test of endurance and for the development of judgment and fast thinking. It is without doubt the fastest game on two feet.”

Some Canadian high schools have introduced lacrosse into their physical education programs and others will probably follow suit when its merits are more generally recognized. As a school sport, it is usually played in the spring and practice can begin when snow is still on the ground.

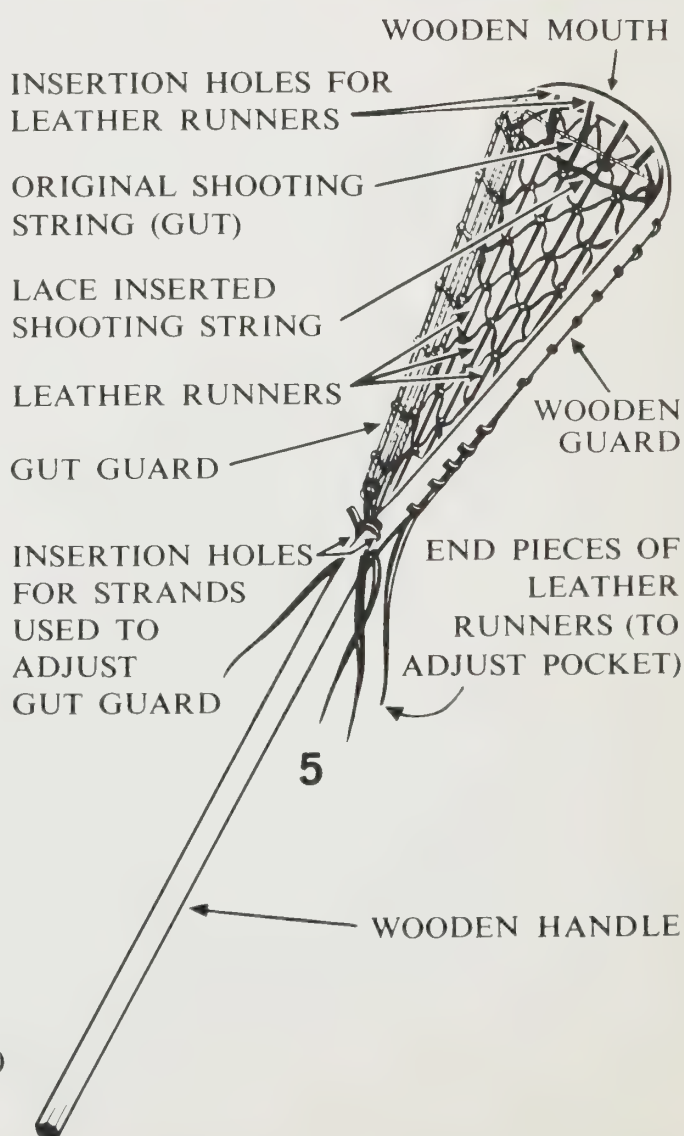




## How the Lacrosse Stick has Changed

The lacrosse stick has changed with time. The stick first used by the Indians was very different from the stick now employed in box lacrosse. It was a one-handed, nearly straight stick, seldom more than three feet long, with a circular or oval hoop from three to twelve inches in diameter, strung with loose netting in which the ball was carried. It seems only natural that the size varied as did the rules, when it is remembered that lacrosse was played by 48 tribes separated by as much as 3,000 miles. Some Indians used two sticks, one in each hand.

1. Old form of Indian "crosse" as seen by Catlin and other early travellers and explorers.
2. One of the early lacrosse sticks used around 1876.
3. The next stage showed an improvement in the framework.
4. This stick was in general use in 1890.
5. The box lacrosse stick used today.





# Care and Repair of the Lacrosse Stick

A lacrosse stick may take as long as three weeks to be worked into proper shape to suit the individual requirements of a player. It may then be expected to last from two to four years. For this reason, care and repair of the lacrosse stick are very important.

## Care of the Stick

Before a stick is used at all, it should be properly taped. Taping is most important around the curved mouth portion. Strong white tape should cover the wooden mouth area and the wooden guard to prevent splitting and chipping. Tape on the handle of the stick is optional, and not nearly as necessary as it is on the afore-mentioned parts. Do *not* put a ball of tape at the very end of the handle as it only proves to be a nuisance.

The gutted portion of the stick should be given the utmost care. Proper attention must be given to the texture of the leather thongs. If the leather becomes dry and hard, some type of grease such as vaseline petroleum should be rubbed into it to stop cracking and breakage. Needless to say, the stick should be kept away from excessive heat, excessive cold and moisture. Also, just as a bow must be unstrung, after use, the gut guard on the left side of the stick should be relaxed when not in use. The two leather strands that control this guard must be untied to ensure a straight guard for the whole season. Ten seconds is all the time needed to make this simple change in the guard.

After play, the stick should be left standing in a corner with the butt of the handle on the floor, or it may be hung on a nail. Make sure that it hangs by the wooden frame, not by the leather pocket.

## Repair of the Stick

Up to two years may be added to the life of a lacrosse stick if the player knows how to repair the leather and wooden parts. Here are some suggestions:

Very often the curved wooden mouth of the stick will crack or start to bend inwards to close the mouth. Steaming over a kettle will soften the wood so that it may be bent back to its proper curvature.

If the gut guard has not been loosened, as previously suggested, it may bend over and partly block partially the opening to the pocket of the stick. It can often be straightened out by weaving small sticks or clothes pegs throughout the strands of the guard and letting it stand for two or three days.

Any part of the leather lacing that breaks may be repaired by a process called splicing. First, trace the broken piece to its loose end. Then remove. With a razor blade or sharp knife make a quarter-inch slit in the mid line of the leather strip about one half inch from the end. (fig. 1 a). Treat the broken end of the leather strip in the stick in a similar fashion. Splice one slit over the other, pull together tightly, then restring the new piece. (fig. 1 b). The splice will make the stick pouch as good as new.

Most sticks at one time or another require what is called a "shooting string". If the stick continually "hooks" and throws the ball downwards at a sharp angle, a shooting string is needed. (fig. 2). The problem is that the pocket in the stick is too deep, so that when the ball leaves the stick at the mouth area it hits the



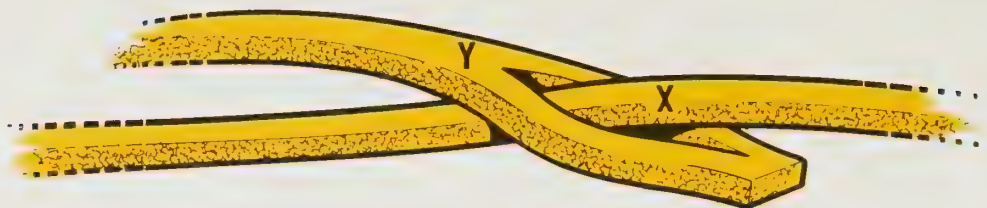


Figure 1a

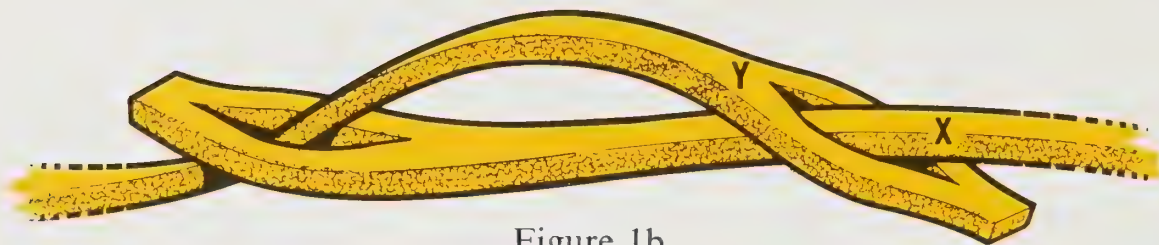


Figure 1b

### LEATHER SPLICE

single gut shooting string and is sent towards the floor. A general tightening of the leather runners in the pocket rids the stick of this problem but leaves the pocket flat like a tennis racquet. The stick then tends to throw too high. A second shooting string remedies the "hook" and still leaves a good pocket in the leather pouch area.

To insert a shooting string, a yellow skate lace is tied at the union of the gut shooting string and the gut guard. One end of the lace is woven across the leather pouch about half an inch below the original shooting string so that it goes *under* the leather runners and *over* the intertwining loops of leather. On the return trip across the pouch the lace is twisted tightly around the initial piece of skate lace, then tied securely at its place of

origin. Make sure that on the return crossing the lace goes *over* the runners and *under* the loops as it is twisted. If this insertion is done properly, the ball will now shoot smoothly from the stick.

A bent handle that is cracked below the halfway mark may be repaired by straightening it in a vise, then applying strong adhesive tape to cover the handle completely. If the handle is broken in this area, an old axe or sledge handle may be shaped into a V to fit into a grooved V in the remaining handle portion of the stick. (See fig. 3). A bolt is then countersunk into the V join and thick, strong glue is liberally applied before the length of the handle is taped. The V join should be four or five inches in length. Glue and tape may also be used to repair a cracked wooden guard.

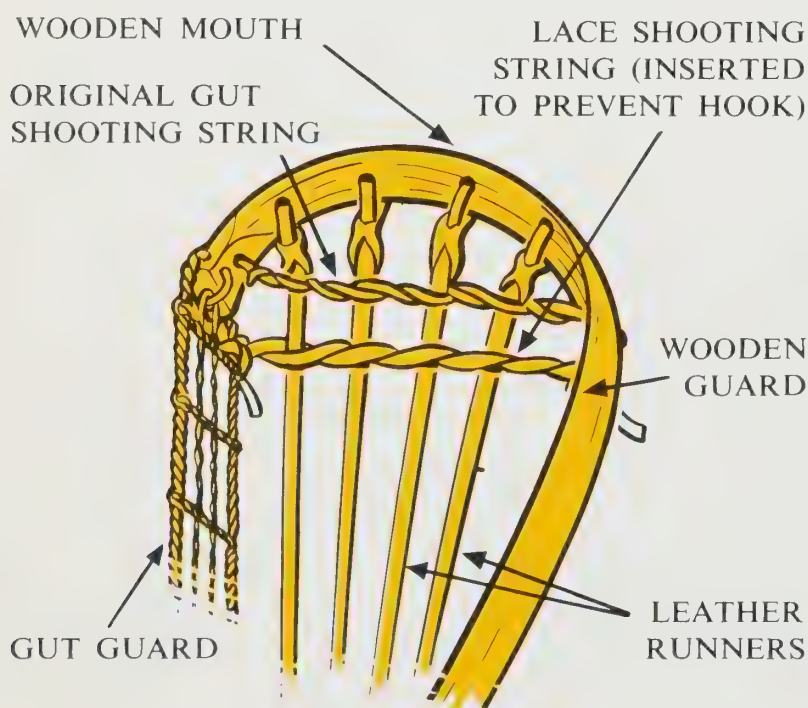


Figure 2  
SHOOTING STRING

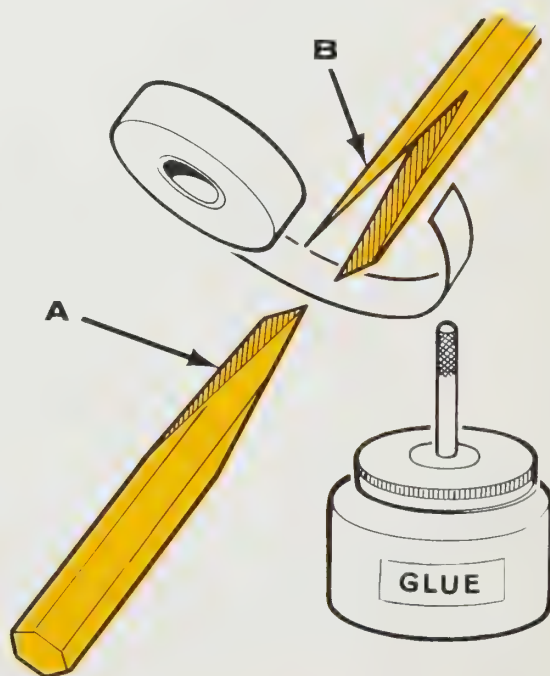
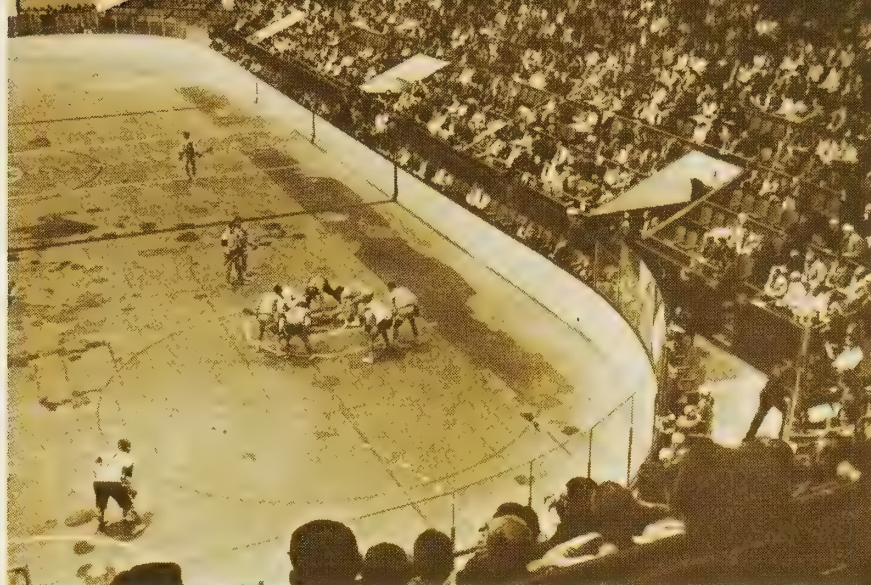


Figure 3  
V-GROOVE HANDLE REPAIR



# How to Promote

# Lacrosse in Your Community



Lacrosse, with its great Canadian tradition – and its value in building a strong, physically fit youth – deserves to be played in every Canadian community.

Youngsters of 10, 11 and 12 love the game and this is the best age to get boys started. High schools and colleges are showing interest in lacrosse as a sport that is not only good fun but a wonderful conditioner.

In communities where lacrosse is not played, it should not be difficult to arouse interest in the game. A few sports-minded individuals can start the ball rolling.

The first step is usually to call a meeting to discuss possibilities. Look for potential members of your lacrosse association among recreation associations, service clubs, community education branches, arena associations, minor sports associations, high-school physical education directors, sports writers. The Canadian Lacrosse Association will send a speaker on lacrosse if requested to do so. The filmstrip illustrated at the beginning of this booklet could be shown also.

An executive group should be formed, including probably a president, secretary-treasurer, and at least three directors. This group would be responsible for organizing teams, choosing playing areas, and appointing managers and coaches. It may sound difficult, starting from scratch, but with the help of the Canadian La-

crosse Association it has been done in many communities. If the interest is there, results will follow.

Local firms, service clubs and other groups can often be of great help in sponsoring teams and supplying equipment.

Good publicity is necessary to build interest in lacrosse in the community. If possible, include some representatives from the publicity media on the executive committee. Arrange for some trophies to be presented to winning teams at the end of the season. Lacrosse will be news – so take full advantage of the publicity opportunities.

If lacrosse can be organized in several neighboring communities at the same time, it helps to arouse competitive spirit. Rivalry between communities has been a potent force in building enthusiasm for the game in many parts of Canada. For instance, in Ontario the Minor Lacrosse Association organizes tournaments in different areas of the province for players from 6 to 18 years of age each year.

There can be real satisfaction in having a part in the development of this great Canadian game in the community. Lacrosse has much to offer Canadian youth, but in areas where it is not being played it will remain unknown unless the initiative is taken by those who realize what their young people are missing.





## Lacrosse in Canada

Lacrosse in Canada is governed by the Canadian Lacrosse Association. This national body has set up uniform rules for the game as played in Canada and is responsible for the national championships played each year. Provincial associations operate in several provinces.

Lacrosse is played mostly in Quebec, Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia although other provinces have teams, and interest in the game is growing in areas where it has not been played before.

The senior amateur championship of Canada has been played for since 1910. The Mann Cup, presented by the late Sir Donald Mann, builder of the Canadian Northern Railway, is awarded to the winning team. A solid gold cup, it is one of the most valuable trophies in sports. Site of the championship series alternates each year between east and west.

The Minto Cup, a silver trophy donated by Lord Minto in 1901, has been emblematic of the junior amateur championship of Canada since 1937. The Duke and Duchess of York (later King George and Queen Mary) were present at the first game played for the Minto Cup between Ottawa and Cornwall.

Senior B and Junior B championships have recently been organized also, to provide teams a class lower than the Mann and Minto Cup Class with opportunities for Canada-wide competition. The President's Trophy is awarded to the Senior B winner and the Castrol Cup to the Junior B winner.

The game was played professionally from the 1890's to the early 1930's, and recently a new professional league, known as the National Lacrosse Association was formed. It included six Canadian and two American teams.





## Lacrosse in Other Countries

Lacrosse is played in England, Australia and the United States. In each of these countries it is the field lacrosse game which is played.

In England, the game has been played since 1867, when 18 Caughnawaga Indians played several exhibition games there and in France. The men's game, of which the controlling body is the English Lacrosse Union, is played at seven universities, and by clubs and schools, mainly in and around London and Manchester. County matches are played and there is an annual fixture between the North of England and the South.

In England, the game is popular with women, and is played in girls' schools, at lacrosse clubs, and at universities. International matches are played, as well as regional matches, by women's teams representing the East, West, North and Midlands of England, under the auspices of the All-England Ladies' Lacrosse Association.

L. L. Mount, a Canadian, is credited with introducing lacrosse to Victoria, Australia, in 1874. The game rapidly caught on and teams were formed in various states. Keen competition between the universities of Melbourne and Adelaide has continued to this day.

Since 1910, when the Garland McHarg cup was presented by a Canadian and a Victorian for interstate competition, the Australian Lacrosse Carnival has been held every three years (whenever possible) to determine the national championship. The Carnivals rotate between the capital cities of the various states.

The Mohawk Club of Troy, N.Y. pioneered the game in the United States in 1868.

Today there are about 22,000 participants in the sport at all educational levels in the United States. The game is especially strong among universities and colleges, which produce many outstanding teams, some of which have won international championships. It is played usually in the spring as part of the varsity sports program.

Perhaps the best indication of the attraction of this great Canadian game is the way it has caught on in several other countries, with little or no promotion. It seems that lacrosse can sell itself when it is well played, for it is primarily a game of skills and thrills.

Canadian teams used to travel abroad to take on all comers. With the growing enthusiasm for lacrosse in Canada, that day may soon be here again.



# The Lacrosse "How To" Kit

This manual is part of the "How To" kit on lacrosse produced by the Fitness and Amateur Sport Directorate of the Department of National Health and Welfare. The kit is the fourth in a series on various sports and recreational activities.

All kits combine the printed word with the most up-to-date film techniques to provide a complete instructional course. Other subjects that have already received attention, or that are in production at the moment, are:

SKIING  
FIGURE SKATING  
FAMILY CAMPING  
COMMUNITY RECREATION  
BADMINTON  
VOLLEYBALL

The components of the Lacrosse "How To" kit are:

## **Filmstrip (colour)** **"Lacrosse—the Canadian Game"**

The strip (35mm) contains 37 frames. Shown on a "still" projector, each frame can be studied in detail; included are helpful hints on selection and use of equipment as well as how to play the game.

## **Film (colour)—"Lacrosse"**

This fast-paced film (16mm, sound) captures the excitement of lacrosse, and shows the enjoyment to be found in the game by player and spectator alike. It is 14½ minutes in length.

## **Films (black-and-white)** **"Learning Lacrosse"**

In these two films (16 mm, sound), the beginner is guided through a complete training course, with slow-motion photography to underline each point. "Part I – Offence" is 17 minutes in length, and "Part II – Defence" is 10 minutes.

All the material listed may be obtained from:

The National Film Board of Canada,  
P.O. Box 6100,  
MONTREAL 3, Quebec.

Prices will be furnished to you on request.

Extra copies of this manual may be obtained from:

The Queen's Printer,  
OTTAWA, Canada.

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## Who's Who to Help You

Call on any of the following persons for help and information on lacrosse.

The Secretary-Treasurer,  
The Canadian Lacrosse Association,  
19 Wenonah Drive,  
Port Credit, Ontario.

OR

The Director,  
Fitness and Amateur Sport Directorate,  
Department of National Health and Welfare,  
OTTAWA, Canada.

Your Provincial Government's Fitness and Recreation Director.

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Roger Duhamel, F.R.S.C.  
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